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The ConnectME Authority Announces Eleventh Round of Broadband Infrastructure Grants and Second Round of Community Broadband Planning Grants

Applications and related materials are on ConnectME's website:
<http://maine.gov/connectme/grants/index.shtml>.

Infrastructure Grant Program

ConnectME awards grants for "last mile" infrastructure to provide broadband to customers in unserved areas of Maine. Specifically, such grants provide a percentage of the cost, matched with funding from an internet service provider. Prospective applicants indicate in their application that they have communicated with nearby existing broadband service providers for current and future plans for expansion in the proposed project area. The intent of this contact is to minimize overlap and to prevent ConnectME Authority funds from being used in areas where private investment is or will deliver broadband service.

Eligible for grant funding will be any area that receives no broadband service or service less than 1.5 Mbps, download. Projects approved for funding must provide service levels of 10 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload.

To date ConnectME has awarded 137 grants, totaling \$11 million, and making broadband available to over 39,000 households. With contribution by private sector internet service providers total funds expended exceed \$21 million.

Community Planning Grant Program

ConnectME awards funds to communities to produce plans that define local broadband needs, goals and through digital inclusion efforts encourages adoption of identified best practices by participating municipalities and organizations. Plans must inventory existing broadband infrastructure assets within the municipality, municipalities or regions and include a gap analysis defining the additional broadband infrastructure necessary to meet identified needs and goals. An assessment of all municipal procedures, policies, rules and ordinances that have the effect of delaying or increasing the cost of broadband infrastructure deployment are part of the process.

To date ConnectME has awarded four planning grants, totaling \$212,000, providing planning assistance to 22 communities.

Please contact Lisa Leahy 207-592-0668 lisa.leahy@maine.gov or David Maxwell 207-624-9793 david.w.maxwell@maine.gov for further information or questions.